

KENT INVICTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
EAST KENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP (EKEDG)

Wednesday 29th May 2019 10.00am.

The Boardroom, Port of Dover, Harbour House, Marine Parade, Dover, Kent, CT17 9BU.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Members Present:

Ray Johnson - Chair

Jonathan Clarke – Morgan Jones

Karen Dean – Brachers LLP

Lee May – Brachers LLP

Mark Minus – MHA

Jo Rossi – Locate in Kent

Tarih Bolton – Martello

Ella Brocklebank – Jenner Construction

Daniel Sangiuseppe – Castlewood Hotels

Jason Lewis – Peter Brett Associates

Richard Christian – Port of Dover

Apologies:

Graham Hammond – Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Jonathan Smith – East Kent College

Steve Wisbey – NIC Instruments Ltd

Mike Marsh - Barclays Bank

Philip Clapham – Smith Wooley

Dan Deed – Woodley Coles

Katherine Harvey – Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Kimberley Anderson – Discovery Park

Louise Askew – Thanet District Council

Tim Ingleton – Dover District Council

Tamasin Jarrett – Betteshanger Park

Andrew Cruttenden - Martello

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Agreed.

3. Outstanding Action

- RJ confirmed he would send through link to live updates for BREXIT.
- JS is to send through details of apprenticeships.
- RJ mentioned clashing of dates of meetings with School holidays and asked if everyone was agreeable to changing May and July dates to a week or so earlier. September EB would be hosting at Jenner and maybe look at Discovery Park for July.

4. Chairman's Comments and Report

RJ reported as follows:

- RJ mentioned Vattenfall Turbine visit and said he would chase them up.
- RJ reported that Dover Fort was being developed. He had been for a tour and it was going to be a specialist digital hub centre. It used to be a prison. They will be creating a business community for the digital sector. There will be a hotel and control centre. The cell block may become an incubation unit following his suggestion. The new name will be Tech Fort.
- RJ mentioned the chamber had spoken with the BCC Network regarding BREXIT.
- RJ had received a letter from Tamasin regarding the Kent Mining Heritage Foundation which confirmed they were now looking to sell the site.
- RJ thanked members for their support in the London Marathon.
- RJ informed the group that Chris Vinson from South Eastern Trains had passed on his thanks to the Group regarding his talk at the previous meeting.

5. Sector Update

JL – Peter Brett Associates, reported they were very busy and had lots of work. They were taking on 2 graduates. JL said that building was moving on at a better pace now in Ashford.

MM - MHA, reported they were not seeing much growth but it was steady with clients not wanting to invest at the moment due to uncertainty.

LM - Brachers, reported there had been growth last year.

JC – Morgan Jones, reported recruitment was steady. There was a lack of quality candidates. There was growth, not locally but further afield. JC said that for people looking with the right skills there were jobs out there. JC said that apprenticeships were the way to go. He said that more local work would be good and they were going as far as Aberdeen.

EB – Jenner, reported very busy and lots of building going on. There is definitely nervousness in the market. They had lots of housing/healthcare work. Finding quality contractors is difficult, especially bricklayers and planning takes forever.

DS – Castlewood Hotels, reported the leisure industry was a bit concerning. April/May are definitely down on last year. Last year was a record business year and not just locally. Golf/spa hotels do still appear to be steady. Looking to the summer hopefully it will be ok. If minimum wage goes up it will cripple the industry. The cost of rates was also a killer. There is such a shortage of staff that they can demand more. DS mentioned The Cave Hotel in Canterbury and that they were pouring a fortune into it. They are offering 25% increase in salaries and poaching staff as a result.

TB – Martello, reported that as like EB all was positive. Housing Association work was really busy. They are also involved in the Harbour Arm/Creative Foundation and everything is positive.

JR – Locate in Kent, reported they had a healthy pipeline and their new brochures were out.

RC – Port of Dover, reported that Dover/BREXIT was not too bad so far. Ferry up ½ %, Tourists 3% so steadily growing. Freight has a slight dip but nevertheless was the 4th busiest year ever with a 30% growth over a 5 year period.

They have spent a lot of time dispelling myths from other service providers and the length of time it would take for the ferries to get to destinations. Supermarkets had concerns about 80% of their supplies being sat on motorways. Dover is currently a trade gateway and the customer space is miniscule with only 2% not EU at the moment. Essentially it will go from a 2 minute delay to a 90 minute delay. JC mentioned that there seemed to be a lack of awareness by the general public and RC confirmed they are working with all main networks of the media. RC said that whilst the European Commission are sympathetic it is also a matter of “. . . well you chose to leave”.

RC confirmed they have been working very closely with Calais, Dunkirk and Eurotunnel.

RC reported that the cruise business had increased 35% in the last year making it the 2nd busiest in the UK. Saga's Spirit of Discovery would be launching from Dover in July. Virgin are coming to Dover from next year. Cargo business (tropical fruit) had seen a 39% increase and marine a 6% increase.

RC said that ferry operations would improve due to new facility, also cargo and cruise with 3 ships being able to dock in new marina. They also had a property portfolio with Cambridge Terrace becoming 25 new apartments.

RJ mentioned compensation for Eurotunnel and asked whether there was any scope for Dover to get some.

RC confirmed it had been looked into with a dedicated Dover Group in Whitehall. He said that with Operation BROCK they felt they had been unfairly treated as the traffic would be sent on a 60 mile detour whereas with Eurotunnel it will sit on its doorstep.

Traffic has been based on 80 lorries an hour going to Manston and they currently have 500 plus. In the long term it would be better to dual the A2 into Dover and a second TAP system could go

in place. The Lower Thames Crossing in place would send half of the Port's traffic a day down the A2. The closure of the Port for one day would cause a traffic build up to Stansted.

RC then showed a video to the Group of the works that have taken place at the Port.

The Port has taken on 300 employees with half of the being from East Kent. 60% of these are female. It is a £250m project and the biggest single investment. They currently have a £70m turnover of which £10m is profit.

The Port still needs 0.1% aggregate to complete the project and Goodwin Sands is still in the judicial review process. If they can't draw from here it will cost another £10m.

Stage 3A of the project will be the Marina curve which will have bars/cafes/restaurants.

Stage 3B will be filling in parts of the existing marine.

RJ thanked RC for his informative talk and video and wished them good luck for the future.

6. Any other business & topics

Nothing to report

Date of next meeting

25th September 2019 – Jenner Construction

27th November 2019